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ABSTRACT

This publication focuses on suggestions for interviewing new vocational teachers to select candidates who better match employment needs. It expands interview techniques to include an assessment of a candidate's ability to solve problems in the classroom, incorporate academic skills into their curriculum, and continue learning new teaching strategies. Recommendations are made for conducting a legal interview, selecting the interview panel, preparing for the interview, conducting an effective interview, and assessing each candidate consistently. A one-page format for an interview is provided. This interview guide suggests interview questions, indicates what the questions will tell the interviewer(s) about the candidate, and leaves a space for remarks. It also proposes what information can be learned from the resume and from references. (YLB)

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Asking the Right Questions:

Interview tips to find the vocational teachers of the future

Vocational teachers must possess a range of new skills to be successful in public education in the future. They must not only be competent in their occupational trade area, but they must also be knowledgeable about all aspects of their industry, be able to work as part of a team, and be willing to participate in school-wide school reform efforts.

Traditionally, interviewing new vocational teachers has focused on credentials and occupational competencies. It is time to expand our interview techniques to include an assessment of a candidate's ability to solve problems in the classroom, incorporate academic skills into their curriculum, and continue learning new teaching strategies.

These skills may not show up on a resume or even in a personal interview if the questions focus on occupational competencies. Choosing the right questions can help us discover strengths and weaknesses of candidates. This will help us select candidates who better match our employment needs.

Conduct a legal interview:

Review current national/state/local policies affecting employment. Nondiscrimination clauses mean you cannot ask questions about age, maiden name, marital status, number and ages of children, child care arrangements, health history, disability or handicap, color, race, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, native tongue or accent, religious creed, or veteran status.

Select the interview panel:

Determine who will participate in the interview process. The individuals should be consistent for all candidates for a specific job.

Prepare for the interview:

- Develop the job profile and profile of the successful candidate, such as being able to work with other teachers, knowledge of all aspects of their industry, oral and written communication skills, and experience with young people.
- Prepare the interview questions. Develop 8-10 questions that explore the candidate's experience with various aspects of the job (see sample on the back).

Conduct an effective interview:

- Set the tone of the interview with friendly introductions. Explain the job profile to the candidate.
- Ask targeted interview questions; take brief notes.

Assess each candidate consistently:

- Review job profile and candidate resume.
- Conduct background/reference checks.
- Review notes from interview.
- Individually consider strengths of candidates.
- Reach panel consensus
- Make panel hiring selection
- Notify successful candidate.
- Notify unsuccessful candidates in writing.

Best of luck finding the very best vocational teachers for the future!

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Candidate's Name:_____ **Date of Interview:** _____

Interview questions you might ask:	You will be looking for:	Remarks:
1. Please summarize your background and experience relevant to this position.	...the candidate's ability to follow instructions to summarize relevant background and experience.	
2. Name several challenges you see with today's youth that you think would influence your classroom. How would you deal with them?	...a sense of the candidate's philosophy of education.	
3. What changes do you anticipate in your occupational field in the next five years? How might these changes affect your instruction? What methods do you use to stay up-to-date in your field?	...a glimpse of the candidate's vision for the future.	
4. Describe a time you worked as part of a team. What was your greatest accomplishment with that team?	...the candidate's experience working as part of a team.	
5. There are many new initiatives in education today, from career exploration to incorporating academic skills into your occupational instruction. • Describe how you might incorporate information about careers in your field into your instruction. • Give an example of the communication skills (reading, speaking, writing) needed in your field and how you might teach or reinforce these skills in your instruction.	...the candidate's knowledge of all aspects their industry ...and their knowledge of the academic skills needed by workers in their occupation.	
6. Case Study: Here is a hypothetical situation similar to one we've had in the past. What action steps would you take if it happened in your classroom? (Provide a short case study in writing, and describe the incident to the candidate.)	...the candidate's ability to solve problems: to define the problem, to determine what facts need to be collected, and how to reach a logical solution.	
7. We encourage staff to take professional development courses. If you could take any course, what would you choose and why?	...an indication of the candidate's perceived weaknesses.	
8. What strengths do you feel you bring to this job?	...an indication of the candidate's perceived strengths.	
Information you might learn from the resume: 9. Strength of experience in occupational field. 10. Strength of experience in education.		
Information you might learn from references: 11. Strength of interpersonal skills		

Panel Member's Name: _____

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